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For Immediate Release

CoSA Senior Michael Silberblatt Earns Finalist Position in NFAA Awards

8,000 Students Apply; 150 Go on to Compete

December 2010, Coronado -- If you ask Coronado resident and Coronado High School senior Michael Silberblatt if his talents fall into the right-brained or left-brained category, his honest answer would be that he is a “whole” brained sort. Whatever the label, Michael’s acting talent earned him a spot as a finalist for a National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts (NFAA) YoungArts award. Michael has been honing his acting chops and love of Shakespeare since he joined Coronado School of the Arts (CoSA) as a freshman. The effort has paid off.

Every CoSA senior in the theatre department records a video to enter into the NFAA contest. Michael entered in the Spoken Theatre category. He chose a monologue from *Titus Andronicus* and a comedic monologue from a play called *Class Action*. Mid-January Michael will join 149 other students from throughout the country who will compete for scholarships (over 8,000 students apply each year). Fifty of those students will go on to participate in a New York City arts week, and from those fifty, 20 will be selected as presidential scholars and receive honors that include spending time with the president. Michael is already assured a \$500 scholarship, but he could win as much as \$10,000 for his work.

Michael has appeared in several CoSA productions, and he is a member of the CoSA Repertory Company, a group that writes, casts, and directs their own plays. But what Michael has also found at CoSA is an affinity for Shakespeare. Michael delivered an outstanding performance as Antipholus in the 2009 CoSA production of *The Comedy of Errors*, and he appeared as Romeo in *Romeo Y Julieta* at the Old Globe Theatre in the summer of 2008. He also earned the title of first runner-up at the 2009 English Speaking Union’s Shakespeare Competition for the entire San Diego Region.

This well-rounded young man also excels at academics. Michael enjoys physics and math. He scored near perfect on the SAT II in math level 2 and took the SAT II in math level 1 for fun – yes for fun – and earned a perfect score on that.

How did a self-described science and math guy find a home on the stage as well? That, Michael will tell you, is exactly what his college essays have been about. “My acting epiphany came about in the fifth grade when my class was reading *A Cricket in Times Square*. We had to read aloud, and I came to a page that was dialog between the mouse and the cat. I liked acting out the voices.” His first real part in a play was in seventh grade when he lived in Virginia; moving to Coronado gave him the opportunity to attend CoSA in high school and to find his passion.

Michael calls attending CoSA a remarkable growth experience. He now dubs himself a Shakespeare fanatic thanks to the influence of CoSA teacher Kim Strassburger. “She has been the single most

influential teacher in my life,” says Michael. Ms. Strassburger works with freshman CoSA students and in the sophomore year explores Shakespeare in depth with the young actors. Michael also credits CoSA with improving his vocal skills and confidence on stage.

After pursuing a liberal arts education as an undergraduate, Michael plans to return to acting in graduate school. It will be interesting to follow the path of this young man and wherever his “whole brained” talents take him.

About Coronado School of the Arts (CoSA)

CoSA is a public arts conservatory for high school students that embraces and encourages artistic creativity and academic excellence. This pre-professional arts program reaches out to talented students from all over San Diego County and offers a nurturing environment focused on individual growth, opportunity, and diversity.

CoSA is made possible by Coronado School of the Arts Foundation, a non-profit tax-exempt 501(c)(3) corporation whose stakeholders are passionate about supporting Coronado School of the Arts (CoSA), improving community awareness of CoSA, and securing funds to perpetuate, improve and expand the school’s programs. For more information on CoSA or the Foundation, call 619.522.4050 or visit www.cosafoundation.org.

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